

Gay Marriage
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I don't understand the furor over gay marriage. Perhaps its just a facet of my personality, a part of my upbringing; or even just the fact that I'm an educated man, given to reason prior to emotion on most subjects. It could even be that as a recent Roman Catholic transplant to the predominantly Baptist Bible-belt region, I'm more sensitive to issues that are named "moral" or "religious." Whatever the case, it disturbs me that not only is the populace up in arms over the idea or act of love; but that the government, whose sole purpose is to protect the well-being of its citizens, has decided that it must intervene.

The Constitution of the United States has been, traditionally, a document used to protect the rights of the citizens, a document that gives rights rather than takes them away. The one instance in which an amendment was issued that prohibited the right of a citizen, the prohibition of the sale of alcoholic beverages within the borders of the United States, resulted in only two things: one, people did what they wanted anyway and continued to drink and even make their own alcohol; and two, for the first time, organized crime became "cool." Maverick criminals such as Al Capone and others were not only feared; by some, they were (and are) revered.

This is not to say that prohibiting homosexuals from wedding one another will result in such a crime wave. It's hard to see renegade homosexuals being burst in on by armed federal agents while they make supper, do the laundry, and walk the dog. Imagine the FBHMI (the Federal Bureau of Homosexual Marriage Investigation) kicking in the door of two men (or women), who have been married (by heterosexual common-law standards of time) in bed with one turning to the other and saying, "Not tonight, honey, I've got a headache," or, "Have you made a pot of coffee for the morning?"

"It's immoral and disgusting!" cry some. "God hates homosexuality!" "It's a deviant act!" These people disturb me. Jimmy Swaggart, the God-fearing evangelist who loves to hire hookers, said that if approached by a homosexual, he'd "kill him and tell God he died." The audience applauded and laughed. This passes for moral guidance. This man, who apparently is so ugly he has to pay for prostitutes on a regular basis, shouldn't worry about being approached by homosexuals, unless one (hopefully) wants to "kill him and tell God he died:" most gay men that I know wouldn't find a fat, balding old man who spews epithets of hate in the name of Christian love attractive in the slightest.

It's funny, in a sad way, what these people are saying. I was always taught that God loves everyone. I was taught that love is a natural occurrence between two people, and that homosexuals were *born* gay; which is scientifically proven, but science isn't something these people believe in: the Catholic church took some three hundred years to *forgive* Galileo for his heresy in suggesting that the Earth was not, in fact the center of the universe (notice I said "forgive": they didn't accept it as fact, they just forgave him). I was also taught acceptance of differences; and that, in fact, acceptance of differences is something that even the uber-Christians

ought to believe in: wasn't it Jesus who told us to, "love your neighbor?" Unless there's some addendum on the end of that that says, "unless he's gay," then these people are focused on the wrong thing entirely and I'm not going to tithe anymore.

"Marriage is a sacred thing between a man and a woman, a bond between them and God." This is another interesting argument. So far as I know, marriage existed long before Christianity. In order for a marriage to be recognized in the United States, all two people need is a license, witnesses, and a licensed officiate. Even atheists can be married. Marriages between heterosexuals, those sacred things between man, woman, and God, end constantly. Spousal abuse, child abuse, murder of one spouse by the other, neglect – the list could continue, but a catalogue of marital abuses needs only be taken so far to demonstrate just how "sacred" some marriages are.

The counter argument to this has been, "Those aren't true marriages. True marriages are bonds of love and trust." Aside from the fact that many monogamous homosexual relationships are, in fact, bonds of love and trust; this counter argument doesn't negate the fact that abusive marriages are still marriages by law. The spouse of the abused still receives the benefits of marriage: he (or she) can still inherit the worldly goods of the abused, can still claim their income as part of their own when applying for a mortgage, can still use their health insurance, and so on.

I'm not opposed to marriage. I am – in fact – married to a lovely woman with whom I have a beautiful daughter. I can visit her in the hospital on her deathbed, and I can adopt children with her if we prove unable to have another on our own. These two rights are denied to homosexual couples. In fact, even if one of them bears a child, the partner cannot adopt the child and share parental rights; even upon the death of the natural parent.

I refuse to believe that a loving God would deny two people the right to live together in matrimony. I refuse to accept the argument that religion prohibits homosexuals from being married. Obscure passages of the Bible have been cited throughout history when a dominant group was seeking the repression of another: has anyone read about the Spanish Inquisition? For those who don't read or refuse to accept that citation, the Bible was also used in England when the aristocracy wanted to retain feudal rights. For a lesson that strikes a little closer to home, the Bible was used by slave owners in the United States to defend their "right" to own another human being. For something a little more recent, Adolf Hitler used the Bible to murder six million people. If, as some conservative folks are, one is a Holocaust denier; remember the dead of September 11, 2001: a group of religious fanatics flew planes into buildings in order to kill numbers of innocent people.

Some will label the last example irrelevant. Some will call it extreme. Some will say that these people weren't using the same Bible that they are. It doesn't matter. What matters is that an obscure passage in a religious text was adopted as an excuse for murder. I have read the Qu'ran. It teaches, much like Christianity, that God is loving and peaceful. While the prohibition of marriage may not be as vile a corruption of a beautiful philosophical religious text as that which resulted in murder or slavery; it is along the same lines: people who fear another group, ignorant bigots who seek to repress the rights of others, will always turn to some prominent source, especially one as open to interpretation as the Bible, in order to enact their own agenda.

Even if one considers homosexuality an abomination, why bother them? They aren't trying to creep into your bedroom, to steal your own pleasure, to in any way lessen the special relationship of marriage. All they want is a broader definition of marriage, one that includes and protects their love. They don't want to destroy your marriage, corrupt your children, or anything like. You're safe. If you want a crusade, if you want something to worry about, then worry about the fact that our children are less literate than ever before. If you are so god-damned insecure in your own life that you need something to worry about; worry about the fact that millions of people all over the world (and here in the good old U. S. of A., the land of opportunity) are starving to death, have no adequate healthcare, and cannot find work paying adequately enough to remedy that situation. Worry about the fact that the minimum wage is three dollars per hour lower than the living wage.

But don't worry about homosexuals. They can, and do, take care of themselves (and each other). If your marriage needs a protection act, it doesn't seem valid to me. If you need to fear something, fine. Turn your fear to good use: instead of spending billions of dollars trying to pass a marriage amendment, try donating to your local food kitchen, ASPCA, Department of Education, homeless shelter, or orphanage. Just don't try to impose your moral standards on a group of people that cause no harm to society.